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Date: January 5, 2016
 TO: Mayor and Council
 VIA: Susan Swift, Director, CPDS
 FROM: Andy Gunning, Deputy Director, CPDS 
 SUBJECT: **Update on Bus Rapid Transit planning and outreach activities**

This is a follow up to the December 14, 2015 Mayor and Council meeting when you provided feedback on the planned outreach approach regarding the Town Center/BRT study. We wanted to update you regarding how we will move forward given the considerations you raised and the direction provided. Here is a summary of the direction we understood was provided on December 14, and how we plan to implement your direction.

I. Hold a work session with the consultants

It was clear you would like to have a work session with the consultant team that conducted the study. We have scheduled the consultants for a work session on February 8, and we will invite the Traffic and Transportation Commission and Planning Commission to that session as well. If there are particular aspects of the study that you would like to make sure are covered, please let us know. We are working on an agenda that covers the issues and concerns you raised in December. The consultants are also aware of the concepts adopted in the Town Center Master Plan (pedestrian promenade, tunnel, etc.), and they will be ready to discuss how those concepts were considered in this study.

II. Conduct outreach to raise awareness about BRT and our Town Center study

It appeared that you were generally in favor of having staff begin conducting public outreach to raise awareness of BRT, what it means in Rockville, and to introduce the concepts that were studied in the Town Center/BRT study. However you wanted to allow for more time in the process, and potentially shift the outreach to begin and finish later. You also wanted to keep the messages presented broad and holistic in terms of how Town Center will be impacted by BRT, and also to present all three (3) BRT treatment options that were studied. You also requested we ensure the stakeholders will include all condominium associations in and around Town Center, which we had planned as well, and also include residents of apartment complexes in the area (including the Upton, Westchester, The Fitz, etc.). Also you suggested we ensure that Montgomery County government and the courts systems are included as stakeholders.

We are suggesting that, based on direction from the February 8 work session, we would coordinate with the stakeholders to schedule presentations over March, April and May. Agenda items will also be scheduled to provide updates to the Planning Commission, Traffic and Transportation Commission and Rockville's Bicycle Advisory Committee. There will also be a description of the outreach to be conducted in each of the upcoming editions of Rockville Reports, as well as other communication channels used by the City.

III. Conduct a community forum in the spring, but later than initially planned

You expressed concern about holding a communitywide forum on BRT in March with the understanding that it might not provide enough opportunities for the event to be promoted in Rockville Reports. While we have a number of other avenues we also rely on to promote community meetings, we agree it would be beneficial to hold this forum later than initially proposed. It will be especially helpful to hear additional feedback from the Mayor and Council during the February 8 work session, and use that direction to structure the communitywide meeting later in the spring.

Therefore we suggest holding this forum in May which would allow plenty of time to raise awareness through the many communication tools and outlets we have available (Rockville Reports, city and civic/citizen association email listservs, Channel 11, social media, and others). Shifting the timeline back for the BRT forum will allow the Mayor and Council to make any recommendations you feel are necessary to the State and the County by June. This should still provide sufficient time for the State to consider including the City's recommendations within the MD 355 corridor study.

As always, if you have any questions or would like additional information, please let us know.

xc. Barbara Matthews, City Manager
Marylou Berg, Communications Director